

GREEN RIDGE STATE FOREST

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2015

Prepared:

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5/29/14
Date

Reviewed:

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8/11/14
Date

Reviewed:

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8/19/14
Date

Approved:

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(Environmental Specialist)

8-25-14
Date

• **State Forest Annual Work Plan**

A. Forest Overview

Includes an over site of the forest; history, size, location, special features, etc.

B. AWP summary

Includes number of sales, total harvest acres, acres by harvest method, estimated harvest volume and other important features for the work to be performed during the next year..

C. Maintenance Projects

Includes boundary maintenance, road maintenance, building maintenance and other such projects.

D. Recreation Projects

Includes projects such as campsite improvements, hunting programs, special recreational activities, ATV and hiking trail maintenance, trail grants, signage, and other projects specific to benefiting recreational users of the forest.

E. Special Projects

Includes activities to gain or maintain third party forest certification, GIS databases, and other such activities.

F. Silvicultural Projects

Includes forest harvesting, prescribed fire programs, fertilization, reforestation, and other such projects. This section must include the following:

Final Silvicultural Activities:

1. Site Map
2. Silvicultural Prescription
3. Stand Data

Review Process:

1. Review Summary
2. Interdisciplinary Team Comments (collective)
3. Advisory Committee Comments
4. Public Comments

G. Watershed Improvement Projects

Includes special projects to enhance water quality, wetland restoration, and other such activities.

H. Ecosystem Restoration Projects

Includes projects to manage exotic invasive species, efforts to restore shale barrens or other natural habitats, and other such activities aimed at improving ecosystems.

I. Monitoring Projects

Includes CFI forest inventories, and other inventory projects being conducted on the forest, watershed monitoring, and other such projects.

J. Budget

Includes a proposed budget specific to the forest.

Forest Overview

Green Ridge State Forest is located in eastern Allegany County. It is the only State Forest located in the Ridge and Valley province. Green Ridge receives the least amount of rainfall in Maryland, averaging 36 inches annually. Consisting of 47,560 acres, Green Ridge is the largest contiguous block of forestland in Maryland within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It accounts for about 30% of the State Forest System and approximately 12% of all DNR land in Maryland.

The general geographic boundaries of Green Ridge are Town Creek to the west and Sideling Hill Creek to the east. The northern boundary extends to the Mason-Dixon Line. The southern boundary parallels the Potomac River.

Elevations range from 500 feet above sea level on the Potomac River to 2,000 feet on Town Hill.

Three Major highways traverse the forest in an east to west direction: Route 144, Maryland Route 51, and Interstate 68.

In the early 1800's, Richard Caton and William Carroll in partnership owned much of the land that is Green Ridge State Forest today. Richard Caton was the son-in-law to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. William Carroll was the grandson of Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek, a framer of the United States Constitution. The land was originally patented from vacant lands during the 1820-1840 period for inclusion into various timber and mining interests, primarily the Town Hill Mining, Manufacturing, and Timber Company. This business venture was financed by the estate of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. The crumbling stone structure known as the Carroll Chimney, part of the steam-powered sawmill built in 1836, is the only known surviving structure of that period.

In the 1880-1912 era, most of the remaining virgin forest was cut and a period of neglect resulted in numerous wildfires. During the early 1900's, the Mertens family of Cumberland attempted to convert the forest into apple orchards and promoted it as "The Largest Apple Orchard in the Universe."

The orchard was subdivided into 10-acre parcels and sold to individuals as investment properties. Five acres of each property parcel was cleared, burned, and planted into apple trees. The remaining five acres had the best trees cut and the poorer trees were left standing. The orchard company went into bankruptcy in 1918. The interests of the corporation were acquired by the State Department of Forestry in 1931.

The first forest management activities at Green Ridge were performed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's. Their main focus was fire control. Other work consisted of building roads, trails, recreation enhancements, and the management of existing forest for its future timber and wildlife potential.

During World War II, the CCC camp at Fifteen Mile Creek housed German prisoners of war who were required to cut pulpwood in the forest. As the forest grew it became popular with outdoor enthusiasts, especially hunters. It also contributed more and more to the local wood products industry.

Today, Green Ridge is a diverse forest consisting primarily of a 110 year old even-aged mixed oak forest, mixed with a wide variety of age classes resulting from various silviculture activities beginning in the late 1960's.

The oak consists of a variety of species, including black oak, white oak, red oak, scarlet oak, and chestnut oak. Five native pines grow at Green Ridge: white pine, Virginia pine, pitch pine, table-mountain pine, and shortleaf pine. Flowering dogwood, redbud, and serviceberry are common understory trees.

Upland animals found in abundant numbers on the forest are white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrel, raccoons, red fox, and cottontail rabbits. Other animals include muskrat, beaver, mink, chipmunks, mice, flying squirrels, weasels, skunks, opossums, bobcat, and black bear.

Wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and woodcock are popular game birds on Green Ridge. Other birds include the pileated woodpecker, red-tailed hawk, and the barred owl. A wide variety of neo-tropical migrants and songbirds also occur on the forest.

Wildflowers such as mayapple, coltsfoot, spring beauty, trillium, bloodroot, and spiderwort flourish at Green Ridge.

Green Ridge State Forest

Fiscal Year 2015

AWP Summary

This work plan includes silviculture proposals for a total of 257 managed acres within the 24,414 acre general management zone in which area based sustainable forest management is practiced. Of these managed acres, harvests are proposed. There will be some variation between managed acres and actual harvest acres to provide for various buffers and/or retention areas. Under area based management, the annual target is 200-250 managed acres.

The silviculture proposals within this plan include 155 acres of variable retention harvests for an estimated 575mbf of hardwood. An additional 24 acres are proposed as an intermediate treatment in 30 acre mixed oak stand.

Other major projects proposed in this AWP and included in the proposal maps are the Outdoor Club Road/ C&O Canal Tow Path - Motorized Access and Campsite Restoration Project and the Shale Barren Restoration Project.

The Outdoor Club Road/ C&O Canal Tow Path - Motorized Access and Campsite Restoration Project is a maintenance project that will restore environmentally sustainable access to two popular primitive campsites and restore emergency motorized access to The C&O Canal as well as restore public access to the NPS C&O Canal and Potomac River. This project will be pending the approval of a corresponding NRT Grant that has been submitted.

The Shale Barren Restoration Project is an ecological restoration project to restore and enhance the unique biological community on this site using integrated management techniques to control invading vegetation and maintain natural ecological processes.

In addition to the above projects, other maintenance, recreation, ecosystem restoration, watershed improvement, monitoring, and special projects are included in this plan. Specific projects are described within the following pages.